

Democratic Presidential Race: 'It Ain't Over Yet'

by Debra Hanania Freeman

Despite the desperate assertions and wishful thinking of the pundits, as well as of the Obama campaign, that the race for the Democratic Presidential nomination is all but over, voters in both Kentucky and Oregon turned out to vote in large numbers on May 20, delivering another landslide victory for Hillary Clinton in Kentucky. In Oregon, although Barack Obama won (as expected), he did so with a far narrower gap between himself and Mrs. Clinton than had been projected.

Clinton's continued command of the popular vote and her stated intention to stay in this fight, forced Obama to back off from his earlier plan to claim the nomination. Lyndon LaRouche issued the following statement regarding Clinton's determination to stay in the race in the aftermath of the Kentucky and Oregon votes:

"The onrushing collapse of the global floating exchange rate monetary system is accelerating, in a hyperinflationary mode. Nothing is being done by any governments around the world to stop it. Today, in May, with petroleum prices soaring past \$130 a barrel, with prices of food and other basic commodities skyrocketing, with the collapse of the international banking system moving apace, it is certain that the situation we shall encounter in June, July, and August will be far more severe than the crisis we face at this moment, as bad as it already is. . . . By the time of the Summer Democratic Party convention, the reality of this global financial and economic catastrophe will be clear to all, and will be the dominant issue in the minds of all American citizens. It is from that standpoint, and that standpoint alone, that one must judge the candidates and their prospects in November" (see box).

Former President Bill Clinton made a similar point in a conference call with his wife's campaign strategists, in which he strongly asserted that there is absolutely nothing to be gained, either for the Democratic Party or for the nation, if

Hillary were to withdraw now. "It's only May and people are already paying over \$4 for a gallon of gas," he said. "What do you think the price is going to be in July? That's just one example for you. This population is going to be beside itself looking for answers. Hillary's focus on the economy has gotten her this far in this campaign and it is what is going to win her the nomination. We can't stop now. The American people need us to not stop now."

It is indeed true that it is Clinton's focus on the economy and her consistent appeal to the lower 80% of the American people that has continued to bring out record numbers of voters, despite the pleas of the press and much of the Democratic Party establishment, and it is what continues to show that Clinton would beat John McCain 49-41% in November. Even liberal blogger Arianna Huffington, who is certainly no Clinton supporter, has been forced to remark that Hillary has found her own message, and in so doing, has rejected "the message Mark Penn's poll numbers told her to adopt."

"And in doing so," Huffington continued, "she has redefined and taken over the Clinton brand. Forget the past. Forget welfare reform, free-trade *über alles*, and third-way DLC [Democratic Leadership Committee]-economics. Since hitting her stride in Ohio, Hillary has transformed the Clinton brand into one that represents working-class Americans." Huffington noted that if Hillary were to fail to take the Presidency, she would nevertheless become "a commanding progressive force in the Senate."

Although Huffington's comments, especially coming from a source not politically friendly to Clinton, do represent what LaRouche called "a highly significant assessment," Clinton is clearly not thinking in terms of what she will do back in the Senate, but what she will do as President. Right now, she is mounting a gritty fight in the remaining primaries

in Montana, South Dakota, and Puerto Rico, and, at the same time, she is aggressively seeking support from the 212 super-delegates who are as yet uncommitted to any candidate. And, in a fight that may prove to be decisive for the future of the Democratic Party, the issue of the seating of delegates from Michigan and Florida will go into its first round when the Democratic Party's Rules and Bylaws Committee meets in Washington, D.C. on May 31, to decide whether, or how, to allocate the delegate votes from the two states.

The FDR Fight Over Florida

Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairman Howard Dean petulantly stripped those states of their delegate votes for holding their primaries earlier than the party wanted. Clinton, who won both states' primaries, has repeatedly called for the panel to seat the delegations. During her Kentucky victory speech, she told her supporters, "I'm going on now to campaign in Montana, South Dakota, and Puerto Rico. But I'm also going to be standing up for the voters of Florida and Michigan. Democrats in those two states cast 2.3 million votes and they deserve to have those votes counted."

Although it is true that the seating of the Florida and Michigan delegations would significantly cut into Obama's lead in pledged delegates—cutting it, by some estimates, to only one—there is a far larger issue at stake.

In Florida, where more than 1.7 million Democrats went to the polls in good faith, a broad coalition of Democratic vot-

ers, which calls itself "FDR," for Florida Demands Representation, is appealing for national support. Close to 400,000 Democrats from outside of Florida have signed a letter to the Committee, stating: "I, along with millions of other Democrats across the nation, feel the DNC's punishment of the Florida Democratic electorate is alienating and disenfranchising its own members. The DNC's refusal to seat Florida delegates and COUNT its popular vote is an act of sabotage against Florida's Democrat Party and the Democratic Party nationally."

The letter implores the Committee members to re-examine their rules and procedures, stating: "It is clear the rules are broken and they can be fixed in time. But the imminent damage by not listening to the will and the voices of millions of voters may never be overcome if the delegates from Florida are not seated and the votes of Democrats continue to be ignored."

FDR has staged demonstrations across the state of Florida and plans a major demonstration at the May 31 meeting in Washington. The group also took its fight directly to Obama during his campaign swing through Florida this week. Demonstrators greeted the Senator at his numerous campaign stops, holding signs reading "Florida to Obama: No You Can't."

FDR state chair Jim Hannagan has stressed that the group, which endorses neither Democratic candidate, believes that by not recognizing the Florida primary vote, the DNC is dam-

LaRouche: Financial Crash Will Dominate Election

Lyndon LaRouche, chairman of the LaRouche Political Action Committee, issued the following statement on May 21, in the aftermath of the Democratic primaries in Kentucky and Oregon.

In my capacity as the chairman of a significant political action committee, I must focus my comments on the top-down reality of the present situation. The onrushing collapse of the global floating exchange rate monetary system is accelerating, in a hyperinflationary mode. Nothing is being done by any governments around the world to stop it. Today, in May, with petroleum prices soaring past \$130 a barrel, with prices of food and other basic commodities skyrocketing, with the collapse of the international banking system moving apace, it is certain that the situation we shall encounter in June, July, and August will be far more severe than the crisis we face at this moment, as bad as it already is.

We have been gripped by a global, hyperinflationary crisis since approximately July 25, 2007, three days after my announcement of that condition. We are now approaching an actual breakdown-crisis, more or less like that hyperinflationary crisis which struck Weimar Germany in the Autumn of 1923. Whatever the actual date of the global breakdown event, we are entering a new phase in the present world, hyperinflationary depression. Up until this moment, all policymakers in London, on Wall Street, and in Washington, are being insane, in their denials of this reality. By the time of the Summer Democratic Party convention, the reality of this global financial and economic catastrophe will be clear to all, and will be the dominant issue in the minds of all American citizens. It is from that standpoint, and that standpoint alone, that one must judge the candidates and their prospects in November.

Everything else, when held up against this onrushing systemic crisis, is gimmick and scandal. It has no intrinsic significance. Until and unless foolish politicians, such as Representative Barney Frank, come to their senses to adopt the measures which I have provided to rescue the U.S.A. from this mess, the economic crisis is the intrinsic factor on which the life or death of this nation now depends.



Florida Democrats, more than 1.7 million of whom voted in the primary, are now fighting to have their votes counted at the Convention. A coalition of those voters has formed an organization called “FDR,” for Florida Demands Representation, which is appealing for national support. Their website (www.floridademandsrepresentation.org/) is shown here.

aging the Party, perhaps irreparably. Hannagan says that FDR has had no response yet from Obama; but that Clinton’s speech in Palm Beach on May 21 represented the kind of elevation of the debate that FDR seeks from both candidates. Clinton located the Constitutional rights of Floridians in the context of the long process of ending slavery and winning the right to vote for all Americans. Hannagan insisted that the Democratic primary process must be permitted to play out until the Convention in August, noting that even a great leader like Abraham Lincoln did not win the nomination on the first ballot.

Ironically, one of the “compromise” proposals favored by those close to Dean would seat the Florida delegation, but grant them only 1/2 a vote. LaRouche condemned Dean’s apparent plans to arbitrarily give Florida half of the delegates to the convention, as a return to slavery:

“At least slaves were counted as 3/5 of a citizen, for purposes of distribution of Congressional seats, before President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. What Howard Dean proposes is a return to conditions worse than slavery, where Florida’s several million Democratic voters are counted as 1/2 a citizen.

“Has Howard Screw forgotten about the Emancipation Proclamation? Or is he just issuing a ‘clarification of interpretation’ that slavery still has its place within the Democratic Party, when it comes to the voters of Florida?”

It is unlikely that the issue will be settled at the May 31 meeting, because the decision by the Rules Committee, what-

ever it is, is subject to appeal to the Credentials Committee and, ultimately, to the floor of the Convention itself.

Obama’s Imperial Problems

Despite Obama’s public attempts to stake his claim to the Democratic nomination, more and more problems for his candidacy are being exposed. For one, Obama’s top foreign policy advisors are working hand-in-glove with leading neo-cons—and McCain advisors—to forge an imperial policy of forcible interventions into sovereign nations such as Myanmar, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. (See “Will Obama Reject the Pinochet Team?” in this section.) Obama should remove these neo-cons from his campaign.

And although the press reports that the Obama campaign is flush with money, the latest fundraising numbers show that the Obama campaign spent more than it raised in April—a first for them in 2008—as it poured money into Pennsylvania, Indiana, and North Carolina. Despite outspending Clinton in Pennsylvania and

Indiana by more than 2 to 1, Obama lost both contests.

This poses a particularly significant problem for Obama, whose effort to persuade superdelegates to declare for him not only includes increasingly heavy-handed pressure, but often is accompanied by outright bribery (see “If He’s So Confident, Why the Desperate Behavior?”, www.larouchepac.com/news/2008/05/18/if-hes-so-confident-why-desperate-behavior.html), leading the Obama superdelegates to be dubbed “the best delegates money can buy.”

But, Obama’s biggest weakness continues to be his inability to mobilize the Party’s blue-collar base. Clinton’s recent landslide victories in West Virginia and Kentucky make clear that while the press loves Obama, the lower 80% of the electorate loves Hillary. And, that isn’t going to change, as long as Clinton continues her focus on vital economic issues. In fact, her overwhelming popular support may make it impossible to settle the nomination battle before the August Convention.

LaRouche has emphasized that, if Senator Clinton continues her active candidacy into the August convention, she will win the nomination, and then go on to soundly defeat John McCain in the general election in November. LaRouche has warned for months that Obama is not electable, and that leading City of London financial circles had backed Obama, only to knock Clinton out of the race. Ultimately, they intend to assure that he is never elected President. Increasingly, Democratic leaders and elected officials are quietly coming to see that LaRouche’s warnings were correct.